

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
 NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
 OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGES

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Investigation of:

COSCO BUSAN/BRIDGE ALLISION
 SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

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 * Docket No.: DCA 08 MM 004
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Interview of: CAPTAIN DOUGLAS ALFERS

Pilot Commission Office
 Pier 9
 San Francisco, California

Tuesday,
 November 13, 2007

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to Notice.

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I N T E R V I E W

(9:05 a.m.)

MR. BOWLING: All right, good morning. It's approximately 9, 9:05, 9:05 on the 13th of November. It's Larry Bowling here with the National Transportation Safety Board. Present with me is Captain Douglas -- Alfors, and his legal representation, Mr. Carr (ph.); and then the President of AMNAV, Mr. Merritt.

Good morning, gentlemen.

I also have with me all the team members from the operational group that are involved in investigating the incident involving the bridge allision between spans Deco -- or Delta and Echo and the Cosco Busan.

INTERVIEW OF CAPTAIN ALFERS

BY MR. BOWLING:

Q. Captain, I'll start off with the questions. And, again, if you don't understand me, just slow me down. I get on a roll, and I've had a lot of orange juice today, so I talk fast. Stop me and make me repeat the question. Can you just give me a bit of a biography, just to get on the record your, your name, a good contact source for you, whether it's a, you know, a business address or a phone, business phone or something we can get hold of you afterwards.

A. Yeah. Well, you got my name, Douglas Alfors. The business address is 201 Burma Road. It's Oakland, California,

1 94607.

2 Q. Okay, thank you. And your approximate age, sir?

3 A. 37.

4 Q. Okay. Can you start me with your maritime background?

5 Get me, get me from your high school to where you are today from
6 an educational standpoint, both non-marine and marine.

7 A. Sure. Okay. I graduated from high school in '88. I
8 went to, to school, San Diego State University. Graduated from
9 there with a Bachelor's of Arts, Bachelor of Arts in communication
10 in '93. That -- later that summer, I got a job on a long-range
11 sport fishing boat out of San Diego. That's my first experience
12 working on the water. Did that for three years. Right after,
13 like towards the end of that I had enough sea time, and I went and
14 got my first captain's license 100-ton near coastal. That would
15 have been '97.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. Something like that. '97, '96. Shortly after that, I
18 got, I got hired working on tractor tugs in San Diego, pushing and
19 pulling all the Navy ships around. I got hired on -- I had my
20 captain's license, but I got hired on as a deckhand. There wasn't
21 a lot of turnover there. My goal was to be running those tugs at
22 some point. After about three years, a spot opened up, and I got
23 my first captain spot running those tugs down there. Ran those
24 for about four years. Let's see, the contract -- contract kind of
25 changed. I wasn't liking the job so much anymore. I quit in

1 2005, approximately. And then I went on a little, little
2 adventure with, with my son. We, we sold everything in San Diego.
3 We moved down to Costa Rico for a couple of years, and then just
4 came back about three months ago. Called up Mill (ph.), asked if
5 he needed any tug masters. He said, yeah, and I started, started
6 working in September here in San Francisco.

7 Q. Okay. So presently you're on your second issuance?

8 A. Third.

9 Q. Third issuance. And the Coast Guard license that you
10 hold now is still the same grade or did you upgrade?

11 A. No. It's -- now it's 200-ton, 200-ton near coastal
12 master towing.

13 Q. Okay, so you have the towing.

14 A. Towing --

15 Q. Towing --

16 A. -- SPCW, ABM limited. I think that's about it. Oh,
17 radar.

18 Q. All right, and your -- where was your license issued out
19 of?

20 A. Long Beach.

21 Q. Okay. How long have you been with AMNAV Maritime
22 Services?

23 A. Three months.

24 Q. Three months. Okay. And you've been operating in the
25 capacity as a master -- or towing vessel captain -- towing vessels

1 since that time?

2 A. Well, I came on for a training period.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. And then I've been -- he sort of hired me in advance of
5 really needing another tug master.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. They have -- there's a lot of action going on, boats in
8 dry dock. When that one gets in the water, they're going to be
9 needing another guy. Have a new boat coming in January. So I got
10 hired on. I did training, running around with these guys and then
11 filling in.

12 Q. As needed?

13 A. As needed, yeah.

14 Q. Okay. What -- just walk me through briefly your -- the
15 training program that you've been run through with ANMAV.

16 A. Yeah. Came on basically with the instructions of go
17 ride on, go ride on those boats until you feel comfortable, and I
18 felt comfortable, I felt comfortable fast, straight away. I just
19 needed to learn this Bay personally and the way the boat feels
20 itself. And I, I was ready to go in about two weeks in that
21 capacity, but they didn't turn me loose for about two and a half
22 months. So I rode, I rode with these guys about five days a week.
23 I did all the -- did almost all the jobs when I was, when I was
24 running with the -- with another captain standing next to me.

25 Q. Okay. so to summarize the in-house training, I'll use

1 that term, you were in in-house training for approximately two and
2 a half months before you actually took the helm as a master of
3 tugs?

4 A. Yeah. Approximately.

5 Q. All right. Want to focus on the events centered around
6 the allision of the bridge and the vessel Cosco Busan. On the 7th
7 of November, walk me through your work schedule. What, what were
8 you, what were you on? What were you off? How were you working
9 at that point?

10 A. That particular day, I came on -- let's see, I've got --
11 I have my log.

12 Q. Yeah. Anything you need to refer to. I would ask that
13 if we talk about those, just for the record, you tell me what
14 you're looking at, and we may ask at one time if we can get copies
15 from your attorney.

16 A. Okay. I have my handwritten log that, that we maintain
17 basically minute-by-minute throughout the day.

18 Q. Okay. And that's basically a -- just for payment
19 purposes or just for so you --

20 A. It's for -- it keeps track of captain and crew, hours
21 we've been working.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. The office uses it for, for billing purposes.

24 Q. Right.

25 A. And I don't know what else.

1 Q. Okay. So but using that reference material, what, what
2 did you have for your -- walk me through your day there before you
3 actually got in the helm or got in the wheelhouse and fired up the
4 diesel and got underway.

5 A. Okay. I came on that night or the previous, the
6 previous night, 11/6 at 2330.

7 Q. Okay. All right, so that was on the 6th of November,
8 right?

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. All right. All right, what were -- were you functioning
11 then as -- were you doing vessel operations or were you just
12 getting the tug prepped and crew --

13 A. We came on, lit off and we got underway minutes after
14 that.

15 Q. Okay. All right.

16 A. We got underway and ran out to, to meet the Lee Hooey at
17 the Bay Bridge. It was inbound to Oakland 68.

18 Q. Okay. And that was the motor vessel Lee Hooey.

19 A. Uh-huh.

20 Q. All right. And it was inbound to number Oakland 68.
21 That transit was successful?

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. Okay. What time did you get the vessel -- what time did
24 you get relieved from that job?

25 A. 0130.

1 Q. 0130. All right. And from that point in the berth 68,
2 you did what?

3 A. 0130 to 0345, we ran light and secured. We hung a line
4 at Oakland 55. Took a nap.

5 Q. There you go. Okay. So Oakland 55, started basically
6 some crew rest period?

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. Who, who was on the towing vessel with you?

9 A. Angel Jimenez.

10 Q. Okay. I'll get the correct spelling of that unless you
11 have it. Do you --

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. All right. I've got the Angel part.

14 A. J-i-m-e-n-e-z.

15 Q. All right. He's running as a deckhand?

16 A. Engineering deckhand.

17 Q. Engineer deckhand. All right.

18 A. That's it.

19 Q. All right. Okay. So again what I'm understanding is
20 around 0345 you're kind of toward the tail end of your rest
21 period?

22 A. Yeah, 3, 3:45, we get up and get back underway, and we
23 run out to the Bay Bridge to meet the, the Maui.

24 Q. Okay, all right. What time did you get lines on the
25 Maui?

1 A. Lines went up on the Maui at 4:05.

2 (Phone rings.)

3 MR. BOWLING: Okay. Sorry about that. Captain, do you
4 mind, my cell phone's charger there, just -- and kill it. I don't
5 know where that fruit fly got in here -- and it --

6 BY MR. BOWLING:

7 Q. All right, so 045 you've got lines on the, the Maui.

8 A. 0405.

9 Q. 0405, yeah. I'm sorry. 0405. All right, so what was
10 it -- again I apologize for the disruption here. What was the
11 berth again?

12 A. Inbound for Oakland 67.

13 Q. Okay. As far as the point when you got the vessel into
14 the berth, walk me from there. What did you do?

15 A. Once we were released from the Maui --

16 Q. Uh-huh.

17 A. -- from 0530 to 0645, we stood by Oakland 56.

18 Q. All right, you were on standby?

19 A. Uh-huh.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. And then we waited that, that's -- we waited aft of
22 Cosco Busan, and it was set to sail at 0630.

23 Q. Okay. So basically at that point in time, the job was
24 already scheduled for the Cosco Busan.

25 A. Uh-huh.

1 Q. So you were standing by waiting for the pilot to
2 assume --

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. -- get to the bridge and start providing direction to
5 you?

6 A. Right.

7 Q. What -- do you recall what time your first interaction
8 was with the pilot?

9 A. About 6:15.

10 Q. All right, and his name?

11 A. We -- I know him as Romeo.

12 Q. Okay. John Cota.

13 A. Uh-huh.

14 Q. And you say but you know him as Romeo. You referring
15 to --

16 A. That's -- designator.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. -- the --

19 Q. That's fine.

20 MR. BOWLING: We all agree he's referring to John Cota.
21 Okay.

22 BY MR. BOWLING:

23 Q. All right, so about 0615 is when you first get his --
24 the first interaction --

25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. -- with, with him?

2 A. Uh-huh.

3 Q. Okay. Can you walk me through what that was?

4 A. Yeah. It was more or less he called, you know, AMNAV
5 tug working Cosco Busan, this is Romeo and we're on Channel 18. I
6 answered up. Quick good morning. He picked a working channel,
7 picked 19 Alpha.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. We switched over, switched over to 19 Alpha, and he said
10 they had a little bit of paperwork to do, finishing up and then
11 we're going to get underway.

12 Q. Okay. What channel did he first bring you up on?

13 A. 19 Alpha.

14 Q. 19 Alpha.

15 A. We switched.

16 Q. And where did you go to when you switched?

17 A. 7 Alpha.

18 Q. All right. All right. Was there any radio traffic on
19 19 Alpha that you recall?

20 A. Yeah, there was fishermen.

21 Q. Okay. When you say fishermen the, the commercial guys?

22 A. I don't know.

23 Q. All right. What were you hearing?

24 A. Guys talking about fishing.

25 Q. Where the bait pods were or where they were headed

1 offshore to?

2 A. Just hot spots.

3 Q. All right. So we don't know if they're commercial or
4 recreational --

5 A. I don't have any idea.

6 Q. All right. All right, so you went over to 7 Alpha.

7 A. Uh-huh.

8 Q. And once you got on 7 Alpha, were there any more
9 communications?

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. That's when all communications were going on in 7 Alpha
12 where you were talking you had the good morning and -- had told
13 you he had some paperwork to do?

14 A. I don't know.

15 Q. Okay. That's fine.

16 A. I don't remember when we switched.

17 Q. All right. So you're on standby on 7 Alpha, VHF, and
18 what happened next?

19 A. Let's see. At what -- I don't know exactly what time I
20 came over there to hang a line. I think it's 6:45.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. When he said come over and hang a line on -- yeah, he
23 did. 0645 he said catch a line on port quarter, single head line.

24 Q. Catch a line. And just for the non-marine types because
25 when I have to go back to DC, I'll have to explain this to non-

1 navigators, catch a line.

2 A. Oh, we, we sent up a line on the port quarter, a single
3 head line.

4 Q. All right. All right. So you've got the Vessel
5 Revolution with a line affixed to the mooring point on the Cosco
6 Busan around 6:45?

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. Okay. All right. Walk me down the --

9 A. Next, there was traffic called Romeo on 14 and let him
10 know that there was an inbound tug in tow.

11 Q. When you say traffic, Vessel Traffic Services?

12 A. Channel 14, yeah.

13 Q. Okay. Okay. All right, do you recall any responses,
14 significance back and forth here?

15 A. Yeah. Romeo asked him where they was at, and Romeo
16 called him on Channel 13.

17 Q. When you say called him, you're referring to the
18 traffic, the inbound traffic --

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. -- the vessel?

21 A. Tug in tow.

22 Q. Okay. Do you recall the name of both the vessels?

23 A. I forget.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. There was actually, it was actually two tugs and a

1 barge.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. They were all made up together, pushing ahead and towing
4 alongside, but I -- we could find it on our -- but I don't
5 remember.

6 Q. Okay. So from that point.

7 A. Romeo said, hey, we're going to, we're going to let you
8 pass and we'll get underway after, after that thing gets by.

9 Q. Okay. So you're standing by waiting for directions
10 then, at that point, waiting for --

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. -- further directions from the pilot. Okay. Anything
13 else of significance occur from that point until the time you got
14 directions from the pilot to get the vessel underway?

15 A. No. We just waited, and Romeo asked if we could see the
16 guy once he got close, and said -- as they passed, he just said,
17 let us know when they pass and we'll get, we'll get out of here.

18 Q. Okay, all right. So get me to the point where you
19 started getting direction from the pilot to unberth --

20 A. Okay.

21 Q. -- the vessel.

22 A. 0755, I let him know that the barge was clear. He said
23 stretch out and back away easy.

24 Q. You had visual on the two tugs and the barge, okay, all
25 right. And repeat again. I'm sorry. I was probably talking when

1 you were actually telling me something. What did the -- Romeo say
2 over the VHF?

3 A. Stretch it out.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. And back away easy.

6 Q. All right. When you say stretch it out, you're
7 referring to take tension on the line?

8 A. We pay out a little bit of line so we can get a better
9 purchase.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. If we're right next to the ship, the wash will be
12 bouncing off the hull, so we like to get off it a little bit.

13 Q. Okay. Do you recall how much line you put out?

14 A. 100 feet.

15 Q. Okay. When -- were there communications going back and
16 forth between you and the pilot?

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. Okay. So once you got that 100 feet of line paid out,
19 what was going on communication wise?

20 A. Simple, back, back easy. Then he either said work it up
21 to half or end it up back and half. I don't remember the exact
22 dialog for that. We backed it up half. We got it -- got the ship
23 into the center of the channel. He said stop, cast off and shift
24 around to the center -- aft.

25 Q. Okay. All right. So at that point you shifted

1 positions of the vessel from the port quarter to the center.

2 A. To the center of -- aft.

3 Q. Right. All right, let me get --

4 MR. BOWLING: Like we said earlier, gentlemen, if you
5 want -- we had some in here the other day.

6 BY MR. BOWLING:

7 Q. Just -- if you don't mind, Captain, and we're not
8 grading you on points for your artistic ability.

9 A. Okay, that's good.

10 Q. Just --

11 A. Because I'm not --

12 Q. Yeah. 20 and square in. Show me the mark, if you don't
13 mind, position A, where you're paying out your line. The original
14 position of the tug. And then position B would be where the pilot
15 asked you to shift.

16 MR. BOWLING: All right. Okay. I'll just let everyone
17 see. Position A. Position B. Gentlemen. I'll leave that there
18 in case we have to get some more visual.

19 BY MR. BOWLING:

20 Q. I'll ask you at some time to basically get permission
21 from the attorney to basically just sign it, and we'll enter that
22 just so we know when we're viewing the transcript what you're
23 referring to.

24 A. Okay.

25 Q. All right, so you got shifted, line made up, ops normal,

1 ops not normal, anything -- in your mind, what, what's going on?

2 Just another day?

3 A. Was normal.

4 Q. Okay, all right. So the vessel is -- at Point Bravo,
5 the vessel was no longer moored to Berth 56 or did you still have
6 lines attached?

7 A. Correct. It's not moored. It's in the center of the
8 channel.

9 Q. Center of the channel. All right. Do you know about
10 what time that was?

11 A. 08.

12 Q. Okay. All right. Okay. Walk me from there forward.

13 A. 08, at 0, at 08, we -- I shifted around then. At this
14 point I called him and let him know -- I asked him how long he's
15 going to hold on to us because we had another job at 8:30. And if
16 I wasn't going to be able to make it, I wanted to call our
17 dispatcher and make arrangements.

18 Q. Right. You did that via VHF?

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. And were you still on seven --

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. Okay. And what was the pilot's response?

23 A. He said he's going to hang on to us through the Bar
24 Channel.

25 Q. Okay.

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: -- navigation chart fell.

2 MR. BOWLING: We're going to enroll you as the keeper of
3 the chart.

4 BY MR. BOWLING:

5 Q. All right. Just show me on the chart approximately
6 where you were at.

7 A. When we shifted?

8 Q. At the time this conversation was going on.

9 A. I was still back down --

10 Q. To your --

11 A. -- in here.

12 Q. -- just off the burr.

13 A. Yeah, just off the burr.

14 Q. Okay, all right. So he basically indicated that he was
15 going to hang on to you, and it was your understanding that he was
16 going to keep you in position Bravo there until what time did he
17 say?

18 A. He didn't say what time. He said through the Bar
19 Channel.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. And so I thought that meant Oakland Bar Channel.

22 Q. Okay. Oakland Bar Channel. Did he state that that
23 would include the passage of the Delta and Echo spans too or break
24 you off prior to that?

25 A. I, I thought because of the fog and the situation going

1 through the bridge would have been -- he'd keep --

2 Q. Yes.

3 A. -- possible --

4 Q. Okay. All right, so once that was communicated to you,
5 was that communication from the pilot clear as to what he expected
6 from you and what you, what you thought he'd be asking of you?

7 A. Yeah. He said to drop back and run, run with us, run a
8 slack line.

9 Q. All right. So basically, when you say run a slack line,
10 still attached but just have enough in the water to keep the
11 tension off?

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. Okay. All right. So from that standpoint, what, what
14 occurred next in the series of events?

15 A. We ran, we ran out the center of the channel.
16 Approximately -- we ran out the Bar Channel nice speed. At Buoy 1
17 and 2, the ship increased speed and came hard to port.

18 Q. You increased -- you say the ship increased speed and
19 came hard to port. What speed do you think the ship was going? I
20 know --

21 A. I don't know --

22 Q. -- had your own --

23 A. -- was going because I was chasing the stern.

24 Q. Right.

25 A. I was going 12 knots.

1 Q. Okay. Now your, your GPS system is giving you the speed
2 over ground or --

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. -- are you using other data?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Okay. So you're not really -- that, that data is not
7 impacted by the amount of water being pushed under the tug from
8 the propulsion of the vessel? Okay. So what speed were you going
9 again?

10 A. 12.

11 Q. About 12 knots. Was the line remaining slack?

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. Was it -- okay.

14 A. It's slack line.

15 Q. All right. Okay. And then your reference points there
16 were up to Buoys 1 and 2, correct?

17 A. Yeah, just past, just past Buoy 1.

18 Q. All right. So we're just toward the -- where we would
19 start lining up to make our approach for spans -- through the span
20 Delta and Echo.

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. Okay. So proceed with the events. I'm sorry.

23 A. Okay. As the ship goes -- comes to port, I ran off on
24 the starboard side of the wash.

25 Q. Uh-huh.

1 A. Out, out of the wash with a slack line in case he needed
2 help with that stern, bringing that stern around.

3 Q. Okay. Were there any VHF communications?

4 A. No.

5 Q. Going on at the time? Okay. All right.

6 A. A couple, a few minutes after that, he steadies up.

7 He's running right in this direction, and --

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: For, for the tape, he's
9 indicating southwest.

10 CAPTAIN ALFERS: Right.

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Generally southwest.

12 CAPTAIN ALFERS: Then he steadies up and starts a slow
13 turn to starboard.

14 BY MR. BOWLING:

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. When he starts to slow turn to starboard, I come across
17 the wake and get on port side.

18 Q. All right.

19 A. Maintaining slack line in case he needs help with that
20 -- turning that stern.

21 Q. All right, and you are at that point -- show me on the
22 nav chart approximately where you were located at?

23 A. When I crossed the wake?

24 Q. Right.

25 BY UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:

1 Q. -- one second, because I have -- if you don't mind just
2 give me a general description of a -- or just a pen and ink -- do
3 we have any photocopies of that section of -- there we go. If we
4 could ask you just to go ahead -- that I will ask -- will probably
5 be the second item we'll document. If you don't mind, at that
6 point in time, can you just tell me, give me an indication where
7 you think you were, realizing that you don't have your nav gear
8 with you.

9 A. Where I began --

10 Q. Show me --

11 A. -- turn to starboard?

12 Q. -- points. I want to show where you -- again in your
13 professional assessment where you think the approximate position
14 of the tug was when the vessel -- line off the stern, but when he
15 started making the port turn, then we started swinging it back
16 around.

17 A. Okay.

18 Q. And we'll label that as Alpha, Point Alpha and Point
19 Bravo. All right.

20 A. So what am I --

21 Q. Well, just --

22 A. -- Alpha --

23 Q. -- give me a reference. This is where you start to
24 making the point turns. I assume that would be the, the Alpha.

25 A. Okay.

1 Q. -- said, you know, she started, first started -- the
2 vessel started --

3 A. This is the hard turn --

4 Q. Port?

5 A. -- to port.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. Okay.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. Okay. About here starts a nice easy turn to starboard.

10 Q. Okay. Were there any communications going on with you
11 and the, the man or the pilot at that time?

12 A. No.

13 Q. Okay. All right.

14 A. A little further the ship increases, increases turns. I
15 don't know how much. My guess is full or something. And puts it
16 hard over to, hard to, hard to starboard.

17 Q. Okay. So do you, do you have an idea how much speed it
18 actually picked up? I mean --

19 A. It probably didn't pick up a lot of speed, but --

20 Q. But --

21 A. -- increasing the wash over the rudder --

22 Q. Right.

23 A. -- steerage.

24 Q. Right.

25 A. So, but --

1 Q. Did at any time during this -- and we'll use that as a,
2 basically a guesstimate of the track line that the vessels were
3 on, on the nav chart there. Do you recall seeing any of the land
4 structures or the structure, the bridge at all from your position?

5 A. No. I couldn't. I couldn't see anything.

6 Q. You're basically still looking at the side shell of the
7 ship and the stern?

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. Okay. And watching your line.

10 A. Right.

11 Q. Okay. Any radio traffic that you recall at that point
12 either to you from the pilot or the pilot to anybody?

13 A. I didn't hear. I heard, I heard the radio going -- at
14 that point.

15 Q. Right.

16 A. But I was really -- I, I was really focusing on what I
17 was doing.

18 Q. Sure.

19 A. And I don't know what, what was being said on there.

20 Q. Okay. Where was your engineer deckhand, Mr. Angel
21 Jimenez?

22 A. He was standing right next to me.

23 Q. Pilothouse?

24 A. Yeah, right, right next to a radio.

25 Q. Okay. Okay. So can you continue with your timeline and

1 the events there, if you don't mind?

2 A. Okay. At B where he starts to make that slow turn to
3 starboard, I came across on the other side in case, you know, in
4 case he needed help with that stern around.

5 Q. Okay. You say you came across. So you went back to
6 what position?

7 A. Now I'm on the, I'm on the port side of the ship's wheel
8 wash.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. Slack line in case --

11 Q. Right.

12 A. -- you know, they say, you know, they need that help
13 around, I, I can get right into it quick and in direct --

14 Q. Helping the, the stern push around toward -- in a
15 southwesterly direction.

16 A. Right.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. At Point C, where -- came -- increase speed and came
19 hard to starboard.

20 Q. Right.

21 A. At that point the ship kicked up 5 or 6 feet of wheel
22 wash. Ship lays over like this, and now the tug is in a really
23 dangerous position.

24 Q. When you said -- you made a hand gesture. Ship laid
25 over like this.

1 A. Oh.

2 Q. What were you referring to?

3 A. The ship got probably a list. I don't know, 30 degrees
4 or -- it, it -- the ship laid over hard.

5 Q. Okay. All right. And you say 30 degrees. 30 degrees
6 to the port?

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. Okay. Any -- did your line tighten at that point?

9 A. No. But I was referring to we were in a dangerous
10 position at that point.

11 Q. Right.

12 A. Well, the line was coming -- it was coming tight and it
13 was coming tight fast.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. And because of the excessive wash and it was blowing us
16 back, and I couldn't, I couldn't catch up.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. I hit the, the brake release and released all the
19 tension on the line.

20 Q. And again for the -- this may be listened to by non-
21 marine type, but the brake release, referring to the brake release
22 on the --

23 A. On the line.

24 Q. -- on the line. On the -- and the winch --

25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. All right, okay. Okay. I was trying to make sure we
2 get it all covered. Okay. So at that point, what happened?

3 A. Well, I released the line, and I was just trying to get
4 the tug out of, out of danger at that point. We -- the things
5 that -- the, the reason I released that, if that line came tight,
6 there's about three things that could have happened. The best
7 thing is part that line. The next possible things that could have
8 happened if we --

9 MR. BOWLING: He'll have to remain out of the interview
10 since we already started it. It's another representative of Fleet
11 Management who is party -- once we start our interviews, we don't
12 like people to come and go. Sorry.

13 MR. ALFERS: The best thing in that situation would have
14 been for that line to part. It hadn't. I got that brake
15 released. The next things that could happen would be rip the bits
16 off, off the ship, slinging them around the aft deck. It could
17 have buckled. It could have been -- it could have pulled the
18 winch, buckled the deck on the tug.

19 BY MR. BOWLING:

20 Q. Right.

21 A. Or the worse case, and this line is strong enough to do
22 it, pull the tug under.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. So I got the line -- I hit the brake, and the line
25 started spinning off.

1 Q. Okay. All right, at that point, did -- what was going
2 through your thought process from the standpoint of managing the
3 ship, the tug, and keeping -- you and the crew of the tug safe?

4 A. Well, I, I flipped around quickly to get -- when he's
5 making that hard right, I'm, I'm still on the port side, the port
6 side of that.

7 Q. Right.

8 A. And seconds after that, he kicks it hard. He kicks it
9 hard to port. So now the stern is swinging back the other way.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. Well, I jumped through all that, that wash again and get
12 back on the starboard, starboard side of the wash, and the line's
13 just spinning off. We have about 400 feet on that, and I was down
14 to about a turn left.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. And at that point when he came hard to port, he
17 steadied, he steadied up and dropped the turns, and I caught up, I
18 caught up to my line. And all about at the same time as we passed
19 Delta Tower, I set the brake. I was recovering my line. And we
20 went past and realized that we hit. We saw the, the damaged
21 fender piles and oil in the water.

22 Q. Okay.

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Just by way of correction. You
24 said that we saw we hit. And I assume what you meant to say is we
25 saw that he hit.

1 MR. ALFERS: Oh.

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You never hit --

3 MR. ALFERS: Right.

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Just so the record's clear.

5 BY UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:

6 Q. Why the attorney's here. And we understood that. I
7 knew when you say we as you were looking at, you know, a composite
8 because you, you still had some -- the line was still to your
9 capstan?

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. Or your wheel and then to -- or your drum and then still
12 affixed to the winch.

13 A. Right, yeah.

14 Q. Okay. Yeah, I understood that. And thank you for
15 clearing it up.

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: We all did, but just for the
17 record.

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah, yeah. No, absolutely.

19 BY MR. BOWLING:

20 Q. Okay. So were there any radio communications at all
21 between you and the pilot at that point?

22 A. No.

23 Q. Okay. Did you find that usual or unusual or what were
24 your expectations there with the communications?

25 A. Well, I, I didn't know why -- I don't know.

1 Q. Okay. All right. So continue through the series of
2 event. You realize at this point that the Cosco Busan has
3 actually alighted with the delta fendering system on the Delta
4 Tower.

5 A. Uh-huh.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. At that point, the ship had steadied up and dropped its
8 turns to something like -- slow. I had heard on Channel 14 that
9 the ship changed its plans and was going to Anchorage 7, and we
10 were pointing right at Anchorage 7, and --

11 Q. And again I'm just trying to keep the timeline accurate
12 because we'll have to regenerate this for Member Hersman tonight
13 and the rest of the team members. But you said you heard the
14 vessel was going to Anchorage 7.

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. Fill, fill me in on that. How did you hear that?

17 A. It was on Channel 14.

18 Q. All right, so you -- your -- the tug has several radios
19 on the --

20 A. Yeah. I had the working channel, I had 14 and 13 on.

21 Q. All right, so you also still on 7 Alpha?

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. Were you scanning? Did you have one VHF on scan so you
24 actually have three VHS's?

25 A. Three VHS's.

1 Q. All right, 13, 14 and on 7 Alpha?

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. Okay. All right, so you'd heard over one of the other
4 -- or one of the VHF frequencies that the vessel was going to
5 Anchorage 7.

6 A. On 14.

7 Q. On 14, on 14. All right. But was that communicated
8 directly to you or was it --

9 A. No.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. It was -- I don't know who. I'm sure it was vessel
12 traffic, and I just heard that Cosco Busan was going there. I
13 don't, I don't know who made the call.

14 Q. Okay, all right.

15 A. And then we, we just stuck with them at that point. I
16 didn't, I didn't call, I didn't call him and he didn't call me.
17 At that point, we were clearly out of danger. He was heading
18 where he was supposed to be heading at that point. I figured that
19 bridge must have been pretty, pretty wild at that point trying to
20 maintain everything.

21 Q. You say the bridge. Now referring to --

22 (Simultaneous comments.)

23 A. Ship, right.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. So we just stuck with them and followed them out to

1 Anchorage 7.

2 Q. You say stuck with them. At that point you had your
3 line taken in to where you were -- you were running slack line or
4 was the line gone at this point?

5 A. No. I caught the line right as we passed the bridge.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. And I pulled it back up to 150 feet.

8 Q. Okay. So you're still running aft --

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. -- to the Cosco Busan on what you would turn is a slack
11 line?

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. Okay. All right. What time -- guesstimate that the,
14 the vessel struck the fendering system on the tower in your best
15 assessment?

16 A. 8:29.

17 Q. 8:29.

18 A. Yeah, 8:29.

19 Q. Okay. And about what time did you -- do you think you
20 heard the radio coms coming across 14 about the vessel going to
21 proceed to Anchorage 7?

22 A. Probably a minute later.

23 Q. Okay. All right. I'm sorry. Go ahead. So pick me up
24 where you kind of let me off here on the timeline was that
25 basically you got your line laid up to about 150 feet or so.

1 A. Uh-huh.

2 Q. And you're just trying to keep your interaction limited.

3 You knew there was a lot of issues going on on the bridge of the

4 --

5 A. Absolutely.

6 Q. -- vessel. Okay. Pick me up from there.

7 A. We round up to Anchorage 7, and he drops the hook, and
8 he gives us a call about close to nine, and, and he said something
9 to the point of Revolution, you're released. I guess I forgot
10 about you in all the excitement.

11 Q. Okay. Do you know what channel that was coming over?

12 A. The working channel.

13 Q. Okay, 7 Alpha, all right. And I want to explore that
14 before we go further in the timeline of events. To the best of
15 your recollection, do you recall any -- can you give me wording,
16 as specific as you recall -- don't put words into Captain Cota's
17 mouth, but tell me what you recall in that exchange between you
18 and him. Did you initiate that VHF call or did he initiate it?

19 A. He called us.

20 Q. Okay. And about what time was that?

21 A. Real close to nine.

22 Q. Okay. So somewhere around nine. And that was the first
23 exchange -- stop me if I'm wrong, because I'm kind of
24 interpolating what we're talking -- you're feeding me here. That
25 was the first VHF exchange you had with the pilot since you two

1 went into an agreement that he was going to leave, you asked him,
2 around eight o'clock, if I have my notes right, that you were guys
3 were in the center of the channel, and he basically said he wanted
4 you to drop back and slack on just to be there for him?

5 A. That's right.

6 Q. Okay. Okay, all right. So on that exchange, again fill
7 me in the gaps there. What -- he contacted you on the radio, and
8 what was his comments again?

9 A. Something like Revolution, you're released. I guess I
10 forgot about you in all the excitement.

11 Q. All right. Did you respond back?

12 A. I, I don't remember what -- exactly what I said, but
13 yeah, I said okay, taking it in.

14 Q. Okay. So at that point, that was the extent of the
15 communication?

16 A. That was it.

17 Q. Nothing further?

18 A. That was it.

19 Q. Okay. Can you walk me through what you did at that
20 point then?

21 A. I came up to the back of the ship and the ship cast us
22 off and Angel pulled in the line.

23 Q. Okay. And what was your next evolution?

24 A. Let's see. We, we just flipped around and we're heading
25 back to the dock at that point.

1 Q. Right. Did you start making notifications your, your
2 company -- at that time --

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. -- situation was?

5 A. Angel from the time when we passed out the tower to when
6 we anchored, that was about a half hour, and he was calling
7 everybody.

8 Q. Okay. Okay.

9 A. I was just running the boat at that point, but Angel
10 made the calls.

11 Q. All right. Did -- is the bridge of the towing vessel
12 equipped with any type of data capturing equipment? I know it's
13 not required, but would you happen to have a VDR onboard?

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. You do?

16 A. What's VDR?

17 Q. Voice data recorder.

18 A. Oh, no.

19 Q. Okay. What type of imaging systems -- do you have
20 anything that would have captured the series of events other than
21 your normal log systems?

22 A. Yeah, have a chart -- data that saves the track line.

23 Q. Okay.

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Coast Guard, we have that?

25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: -- we have already provided it to

1 Ensign Hopper.

2 MR. BOWLING: Okay. We will need -- we'll coordinate --

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: CD's? CD's?

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No. We gave them printout.

5 MR. BOWLING: Okay. We'll, we'll need to get our hands
6 on that, but side bar. My apologies.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: -- yes --

8 BY MR. BOWLING:

9 Q. Do you have any camera equipment, photographic equipment
10 onboard that you may have used or any -- get some pictures? Okay.
11 All right. So --

12 A. Oh, wait. Angel tried to take a picture of the ship,
13 and he tried to take a picture of the bridge with his phone.

14 Q. Cell phone?

15 A. I didn't see them. After the fact, he said they didn't
16 turn out.

17 Q. Okay. Did you have any further radio contact with the
18 pilot at that point?

19 A. No.

20 Q. Okay. And from there, what was your direction? You --
21 did you go back to the -- your berthing location?

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. And where do you normally berth the vessel at?

24 A. At outer Oakland Berth 9.

25 Q. Okay. Let me go back to a couple of things just to get

1 a scenario what was going on out there. When you were waiting
2 after the vessel at Berth 56, what was the weather conditions you
3 were experiencing there at the berth?

4 A. Fog.

5 Q. How -- again, I'm from the East Coast. So fog to me is,
6 you know, about two mile visibility.

7 A. I'd say 1,000, 1,000 feet.

8 Q. Okay. In your assessment since you've been running as
9 master, I'm sure you've seen it outside that. Is that an
10 operational parameter? Is it non-operational? Would you feel
11 comfortable navigating in that?

12 A. I, I would.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. This was -- that estimate you just gave me was around
16 what time was that assessment of the weather made at? Around --
17 before 6:45?

18 A. No. It would have been right when we got underway.

19 Q. Okay. So around --

20 (Simultaneous comments.)

21 Q. Okay, all right. What about -- were there any
22 interactions with regard to the pilot asking you what the
23 capabilities or the speeds were of your tug as far as the forward,
24 safe forward operating speed?

25 A. There was no communication about that.

1 Q. Okay. What is the, the -- what is the speed of the
2 towing vessel in the forward --

3 A. It, it depends on --

4 Q. Without the pushing --

5 A. Without --

6 Q. -- red line.

7 A. -- without current?

8 Q. Right.

9 A. Without current involved?

10 Q. Ideal conditions.

11 A. 13.

12 Q. 13 knots.

13 A. Maybe a little faster. I, I'm not for sure.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. I never -- I didn't take it wide open.

16 Q. What do you normally run at when you're doing these --
17 performing these maneuvering evolutions?

18 A. Which part?

19 Q. Well, the part where you're off the stern on slack line
20 as you, you're --

21 A. We see 10 and 11 knots often.

22 Q. Okay. Does it create any problems for you as master, as
23 far as can you keep the line -- enough speed on the tug to keep
24 the line slack?

25 A. I've got to be paying attention.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. But it -- I wouldn't consider that a problem.

3 Q. Yeah. No, I, I didn't mean it in that fashion. Just
4 meant that it, it -- a challenge for you to keep -- with your tug
5 speed and the line to keep it from tightening up?

6 A. I -- it's challenging in the -- only in the respect that
7 I have to be on top of my game at that moment. Because if we
8 increase speed much more, we're going to get -- we're going to be
9 drag --

10 Q. I got you. Once you got out to the light position Bravo
11 or Charlie, which we're getting into very close proximity of
12 position Charlie to the bridge or to the support tower Delta.

13 A. Uh-huh.

14 Q. What was the weather at that point in your recollection?

15 A. I think the same, approximately 1,000 feet.

16 Q. About 1,000 foot of visibility. Any concerns from you
17 standpoint with either current or winds at that point?

18 A. Concerns? No.

19 Q. Okay. Do you recall what the wind direction was?

20 A. I, I would say the wind was negligible.

21 Q. Okay. What about any current?

22 A. Current was about a knot and a half flood.

23 Q. Okay. And from what direction?

24 A. It was a flood so.

25 Q. Okay, all right. Again, just give me the facts. Don't

1 speculate. But have you interacted with Captain Cota before that
2 you recall?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. How -- with that said, were there any behaviors on the
5 seventh during the evolution of the Cosco Busan that were out of
6 norm for your --

7 A. No.

8 Q. -- two interacting?

9 A. No.

10 Q. Okay. Was there any identifiable slurred speech?

11 A. No.

12 Q. Did you, did you at any time did you see the Captain,
13 Captain Cota?

14 A. No.

15 Q. No visuals at all?

16 A. No.

17 Q. Did you ever -- after the allision and you're on the,
18 the far side of -- you've already passed through Spans D and E,
19 they were headed to Anchorage 7, at any time did you see the pilot
20 or the master come out of the bridge wing and look back at the --
21 you and the crew and the towing vessel?

22 A. No.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. I don't know that we can see each other on that ship.

25 Q. As far as the -- you felt that at some point you began a

1 series of what I would call -- call improvement maneuvering
2 actions as a master to minimize the potential for damage to the
3 towing vessel and prevent you and the crewmen on the Revolution
4 from being put in peril including the evolution of starting to let
5 your line free-spool, when at that point in time, how, how did you
6 feel on the bridge? Were you on a level of -- I mean high concern
7 for the safety of the towing vessel and, and you and your crewmate
8 or fellow crew?

9 A. At which point?

10 Q. Well, when you noticed the vessel had a fairly
11 significant list on --

12 A. When I --

13 Q. -- Cosco Busan --

14 A. -- my line?

15 Q. Yes.

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. All right. Was -- at any time did the line tighten up
18 so that --

19 A. No.

20 Q. Okay. So your -- these actions you were taking were
21 from a preventative standpoint?

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. From Point C --

25 Q. Referring to the chart? Okay.

1 A. Point C to what's called Point D when we passed Delta
2 Tower --

3 Q. That's in point you just put on between Delta
4 and --

5 A. Well, that's at Delta.

6 Q. Yeah, at Delta, right.

7 A. That was about a minute or less.

8 Q. Okay. So --

9 A. When I dumped my line and when I recovered it was a
10 minute or less.

11 MR. BOWLING: I think that's all I have right now. Let
12 me -- what we'll do is we'll ask again the team members, if you
13 ask questions, make sure for the record you identify who you are,
14 and we'll go from there. Actually, please come on up and speak
15 close to the microphone. So we'll actually start, we'll start
16 here.

17 BY CAPTAIN HURT:

18 Q. Good morning. Rick Hurt with the Bar Pilots. Thanks
19 for coming in, Captain. I've just -- for the record, a few things
20 regarding the specifications of the -- talking about the tug
21 Revolution.

22 A. Uh-huh.

23 Q. What's her horsepower?

24 A. 5,000.

25 Q. And drive units? Just for the lay people. Twin ASD's

1 located aft.

2 A. Exactly.

3 Q. So non-conventional tractor --

4 A. Uh-huh.

5 Q. -- with an automated winch that's winch that's operated

6 from the wheelhouse.

7 A. Right.

8 Q. Rendering all of that --

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Okay. You mentioned you thought the maximum -- I'd like

11 to get a little bit more information on what you think your speeds

12 were along the transit.

13 A. Sure.

14 Q. Let's say at 7 and 8, leaving the estuary. What would

15 you estimate -- you know, I realize --

16 A. I would estimate 7 to 8 knots.

17 Q. 7 or 8 knots. And then let's say off of PCT or the end

18 of Berth 37, that vicinity.

19 A. Maybe 8, 9.

20 Q. 8, 9. And then you, you believe off of 1 and 2 you are

21 now up to 12 knots at 1 and 2? Is that --

22 A. Yeah. I saw 12 knots -- that one --

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. -- around that. When he came to port.

25 Q. And do you notice -- that 12 knots, can that be

1 inaccurate when you're making a, a sharp turn because it's now
2 measuring the rotational speed instead of -- speed? Do you ever
3 notice --

4 A. Absolutely, and because of tug rocking and rolling you
5 get incomplete readings or inaccurate readings.

6 Q. Okay. And so at 1 and 12, at 12 knots you stated that
7 the vessel increased speed. Is that, is that correct? Or there
8 was an increase from 1 and 2 from 12 knots? Is that what I heard?

9 A. No. That's where I noticed an increase.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. Right at when we made the turn. Like I thought he was
12 kicking it up to help make the turn, just get --

13 Q. You -- when you say pick up, you saw more wash at that
14 time? You saw some more wash come?

15 A. I, I don't know.

16 Q. Okay. I'm sorry. I thought I understood that you said
17 at 1 and 2 that he increased the speed, and I --

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: -- have you pull the chart away
19 from the Captain and --

20 BY CAPTAIN HURT:

21 Q. That's okay. Let me ask in your, in your experience, if
22 you're doing 12 knots and you say the maximum speed is maybe 13,
23 this is through the water, never mind over the ground, how
24 effective do you think -- how much assistance could you render do
25 you think?

1 MR. BOWLING: Let me stop right there because we're not
2 -- we need to focus just on the facts to the case here. So that
3 question, if you want to rephrase it specifically to -- there's no
4 opinions. If you want to, you know, relate it, tie it in strictly
5 to the Cosco Busan and this evolution, we'll --

6 CAPTAIN HURT: That's, yeah, that's what I'm asking.

7 MR. BOWLING: All right, but we started out with, if I
8 heard right, his opinion.

9 CAPTAIN HURT: Okay.

10 MR. BOWLING: Just the facts.

11 BY CAPTAIN HURT:

12 Q. Let me -- can, can you turn a ship at 12 knots with,
13 with that --

14 A. The Cosco Busan could have been turned -- I could, I
15 could -- I would be best used as brakes at that point.

16 Q. Okay. And how comfortable would you be in an indirect
17 mode trying to make a turn at 12 knots?

18 A. I wouldn't be comfortable at all. I would ask to slow
19 down.

20 Q. Okay.

21 CAPTAIN HURT: Is that --

22 MR. BOWLING: Yeah, that's fine. Just --

23 CAPTAIN HURT: Sure, I understand.

24 MR. BOWLING: Yeah, because, but you know --

25 CAPTAIN HURT: I just didn't want him to -- when I said

1 based on his experience whether --

2 MR. BOWLING: Yeah. But the rest of the team members,
3 just -- again facts of the incident, that's what we're here for.

4 BY CAPTAIN HURT:

5 Q. How much line do you normally run in this area? What's
6 your, what's your scope of line normally? Maybe we covered that,
7 but I --

8 A. When we made that turn?

9 Q. Normally when you transit this area, what, what's your
10 normal scope of line for an escort?

11 A. 150, 200 feet.

12 Q. Okay. And at the maximum time of payout when you, when
13 you were feeling uncomfortable and you released the brake, what do
14 you, what do you think you were out to? You say you had one wrap
15 left. What do you think you had?

16 A. Well, I could get an exact number but --

17 Q. No.

18 A. I guess about 400 feet.

19 Q. Okay.

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: 400 feet out?

21 CAPTAIN ALFERS: Yeah.

22 CAPTAIN HURT: I think that's all I have. Thank you.

23 MR. BOWLING: Again, sorry for the interruption.

24 Coast Guard, the local investigating officer will go
25 next. Come on up so we can hear.

1 MR. WHEATLEY: Good morning, Captain. Ross Wheatley,
2 Coast Guard Investigations, Sector San Francisco. I don't have
3 any questions for you at this point. Thank you.

4 MR. BOWLING: Okay. District representative.

5 BY MR. SCHAEFER:

6 Q. Good morning. I'm Scott Schaefer, Coast Guard
7 District 11. Do you think that in this incident that as -- once
8 you got off the berth and were underway were there any commands
9 for you to help for -- in any turns or slow any turns?

10 A. No.

11 Q. Do you think that having you back there, did you help or
12 slow any turns of the vessel?

13 A. No.

14 Q. You mentioned you were monitoring or listening on
15 Channel 14 with -- between Vessel Traffic and Unit Romeo. Did you
16 hear Vessel Traffic come out and question Unit Romeo's intentions?

17 A. I didn't.

18 Q. After the allision, did you see any oil come off the
19 ship?

20 A. Yeah. I saw it while in the water.

21 Q. Any estimate of how much oil you saw go in the water or
22 how --

23 A. No idea.

24 Q. Now you mentioned the maneuvering earlier. You talked
25 about -- you were talking about his speed, and you mentioned he

1 was coming to port I think -- how long was that turn to port he
2 made? And I'm talking about the turn to -- as you were
3 approaching Yerba Buena Island.

4 A. Okay, the first turn, first turn to port?

5 Q. Correct.

6 A. How long did it take to get around?

7 Q. As he was turning, was this a slow, gradual turn
8 and --

9 A. No. No, it wasn't slow.

10 Q. And was it a little difficult to judge from your
11 position, but how many degrees course change was that do you
12 think?

13 A. 80.

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Sorry. How much was that?

15 CAPTAIN ALFERS: I guess 80.

16 BY MR. SCHAEFER:

17 Q. And this was as you were approaching Yerba Island?
18 We're still in that --

19 A. Yeah.

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Use the chart.

21 MR. SCHAEFER: Okay.

22 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: The witness is already familiar.
23 He's got some very good points on there, Alpha, Bravo, Charlie,
24 Delta.

25 BY MR. SCHAEFER:

1 Q. Okay, so that was around Alpha -- made the turn to port?

2 A. That's right.

3 Q. And then little tough to tell with the artwork, but was
4 he -- did he steady up on a course for awhile then or did a turn
5 to starboard come right after the turn to port?

6 A. He, I think he, he kind of -- he steadied up for a short
7 while.

8 Q. Was that a couple minutes or hard to judge?

9 A. Yeah, it was a couple of minutes. It was two minutes.

10 Q. And then after he steadied up for two minutes, then he
11 started turn to starboard?

12 A. Yeah. Yeah, slow turn to starboard.

13 Q. Was the turn to starboard about the same speed as the
14 turn to port? I'm just looking for some indication -- did it look
15 like about the same amount of rudder or --

16 A. No. It was slightly -- we weren't -- I just saw that
17 12-knot spike just the one time and then we were down around 10.

18 Q. But as far as the, the speed of the course change, and I
19 understand you've got currents involved and everything, but did it
20 look like about the same amount of rudder he used for the port
21 change?

22 A. No.

23 Q. Port --

24 A. No. It was, it was a slow -- at Point B, it was a slow
25 turn to starboard.

1 Q. Okay, and then is it Point C it became a much quicker
2 turn to starboard?

3 A. Yeah. At Point C, we knew something was wrong, and he
4 turned real hard to starboard and increased turns.

5 Q. And how long between that and the allision, do you
6 think?

7 A. I think a minute.

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And if I may interject just by
9 way of clarification. When you say took a real hard turn to
10 starboard and increased turns, that means RPMs on the engine,
11 correct?

12 CAPTAIN ALFERS: Yes.

13 Approximately a minute from that time.

14 MR. SCHAEFER: Okay, thanks Captain.

15 MR. BOWLING: All right. What I'd like to do next is go
16 to --

17 CAPTAIN ALFERS: Can I -- you know what, can I clarify
18 something?

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah, please.

20 CAPTAIN ALFERS: Because you said when I was here and
21 when there was an allision.

22 BY MR. SCHAEFER:

23 Q. You're referring to Point Charlie on your -- the
24 schematic --

25 A. The time --

1 Q. -- chart --

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. Well, that was about 1,000 feet away from where I was
5 at, so at Point C, for me I was probably 1,000, you know, feet
6 back from the ship. My Point C and my Point D was a minute.

7 Q. All right. Okay.

8 MR. BOWLING: Yeah, at any time -- the data you're
9 providing to the group is invaluable. Any time something you need
10 to clarify, by all means feel free to do that.

11 State.

12 BY MR. HOLLY:

13 Q. Okay. Good morning, Captain. My name is Rick Holly
14 with the Department of Fish and Game. I just had a couple of
15 quick points for clarification. I'll just look at the chart here
16 first.

17 A. Sure.

18 Q. Okay. I'm looking at Point A, and from my notes here,
19 there was a hard turn to port.

20 A. Uh-huh.

21 Q. And at Point B, which is a southwesterly -- from
22 southwesterly from Point A, is a gradual turn to starboard?

23 A. Uh-huh.

24 Q. And then at Point C, this is a hard turn?

25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. Continue starboard without a turn to port?

2 A. Right.

3 Q. Okay. When you -- I understand. Quick question. When
4 you saw oil in the water, did you call anybody or tell anybody
5 about that?

6 A. I didn't.

7 Q. Okay. But you heard people talking about --

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. -- oil in the water?

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. Do you know where that came from?

12 A. No, I, no. I thought maybe a -- the only other people I
13 knew who were out there at the moment were ferries, so.

14 Q. Okay. One last question. You, you've been in and out
15 of this channel a number of times, is that correct?

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. In those same -- in the same configuration made up to a
18 vessel aft?

19 A. Outbound? No.

20 Q. Okay. Have you observed during your training any, any
21 tugs hooked up in a position like that?

22 A. We're hooked up like that all the time. Do you
23 mean --

24 Q. In this, this particular --

25 A. In and outbound, in and outbound --

1 Q. Going out in this channel making a turn.

2 A. No. I've never seen anybody -- outbound.

3 Q. Okay. Have you transited many times during your time in
4 the Bay here in visibilities of 1,000 feet?

5 A. More or less.

6 Q. Okay. So it's not, not an unusual occurrence for you to
7 be working with vessels in visibility like this?

8 A. No. Here in San Francisco, I've been in the fog just a
9 handful of times.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. But I'm comfortable in, in fog with less visibility than
12 that.

13 Q. Okay. Is -- was there anything unusual in this maneuver
14 coming out of the channel that caused you any concern? Was this
15 just a normal he's going to port, he's coming to starboard, he's
16 lining up for the bridge?

17 A. Okay. Well, I originally thought he was going to cast
18 us off about this point.

19 Q. When you say this point --

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Point, Point A.

21 CAPTAIN ALFERS: Yeah, yeah.

22 BY MR. HOLLY:

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. So he comes hard to port, and he's making this -- almost
25 a parallel course for the bridge. So I thought a number of things

1 could be a possibility at this point. I thought perhaps there was
2 a change with which span he was going to use, and that maybe I
3 missed it on Channel 14. I thought maybe he was setting up for
4 Alpha Bravo now -- maybe there was some new traffic, or he decided
5 to call it off and maybe go back to Anchorage 9.

6 Q. Okay. So the turn down to port, the hard turn down to
7 port was a little bit unusual?

8 A. Yeah. It raised, it raised -- it --

9 Q. Where are we going?

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. Okay. Okay. That's all I have. Thank you very much.
12 Glad you're still here.

13 MR. BOWLING: The group representative from Fleet
14 Management will be next. Just have to make sure you identify
15 yourself, please.

16 BY CAPTAIN AGA:

17 Q. Hello, Captain. Good morning.

18 A. Hi.

19 Q. I work for Fleet Management, the technical operator of
20 the ship.

21 A. Okay.

22 Q. The crew onboard ship is part of our team. I have a
23 couple of questions for you. Did you say the visibility remained
24 good all the time but the -- I'll rephrase the question. Was it
25 1,000 feet throughout the time you were tied to the tug -- tied to

1 the ship?

2 A. My best estimate.

3 Q. Okay. When you said you released the brake and the rope
4 ran out --

5 A. Uh-huh.

6 Q. -- if all the 400 feet of rope would have run out, would
7 you have -- would the tug have girdled or I mean --

8 A. No. It would have --

9 Q. -- the line would have gone out.

10 MR. BOWLING: One person has to speak at a time because
11 the tape is going to come out all garbled. So just let him finish
12 his question before you answer.

13 CAPTAIN ALFERS: Okay.

14 BY CAPTAIN AGA:

15 Q. So you released the brake, so then you saved the tug
16 from getting under?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. If the, if the rope had run out?

19 A. If the rope had run out, it would have just dumped in
20 the water.

21 Q. Okay. Have you ever escorted another ship up to the
22 Bay, up to the Bay Bridge?

23 A. Outbound? No.

24 Q. Outbound, no. Inbound where do you tie up?

25 A. We make up at the bridge.

1 Q. Okay, let me -- to this point again. Did you say the
2 ship was also listed to starboard or was it only the tug which was
3 getting listed to starboard? Did you see the ship --

4 A. List that way? When the ship made that hard turn to
5 starboard --

6 Q. Uh-huh.

7 A. -- it laid over to port.

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Laid over -- yeah, let me --
9 because you, you were referring to the list. It actually listed
10 over to port, correct?

11 CAPTAIN ALFERS: Uh-huh.

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay.

13 BY CAPTAIN AGA:

14 Q. It listed over, but the ship was listing over to port?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Okay. Thank you.

17 MR. BOWLING: Okay. You're actually doing very well.
18 The other interviews were very lengthy. We should have you out of
19 here in probably 40 minutes.

20 Next.

21 MR. BROWN: Speak louder -- get my voice working.

22 BY MR. BROWN:

23 Q. Good morning, Captain.

24 A. Good morning.

25 Q. There's a series of buoys coming out of the channel

1 there.

2 MR. BOWLING: Your name.

3 MR. BROWN: I'm sorry. Steve Brown with the American
4 Pilot's Association.

5 BY MR. BROWN:

6 Q. Did you see those buoys?

7 A. I saw Buoy 1 as we passed Buoy 1.

8 Q. And the other thing, last question, you mentioned coming
9 hard port -- or actually -- you did mention, you did say increased
10 speed, came hard of port.

11 A. Okay.

12 Q. Then there was a period of time where nothing was
13 occurring. Did he check that swing or --

14 A. Yeah, he checked that swing and steadied up.

15 Q. Okay. So the rudder did go to the other way --

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. -- steadied up, then came slow to port or slow to
18 starboard.

19 MR. BOWLING: Well, let, let -- yeah, just -- you
20 describe what you saw.

21 CAPTAIN ALFERS: Yeah, I couldn't see the rudder because
22 there was some --

23 BY MR. BROWN:

24 Q. But you could --

25 A. -- ship.

1 Q. -- see the -- in your opinion, what was the series of
2 the -- rudder swings?

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: He was referring to. Did you --

4 CAPTAIN ALFERS: Yeah, it was to port.

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay.

6 CAPTAIN ALFERS: And then the ship steadied up. I, I
7 didn't know what the rudder was doing. Couldn't see it.

8 BY MR. BOWLING:

9 Q. And you're basically referring -- this is Larry Bowling.
10 You're, you're making these assessments on the wash, prop wash?

11 A. And where the stern's going.

12 Q. Right. Okay. Right. Okay.

13 MR. BOWLING: Have any other --

14 MR. BROWN: That's fine. No.

15 MR. BOWLING: All right.

16 If you need to get some water or something, I mean feel
17 free to go out and come in.

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Well now you're all going to have
19 a cold.

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: We'll make sure to sanitize
21 ourselves.

22 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay. Will you be comfortable
23 asking questions and taking notes or do you want me do notes for
24 you?

25 MR. MOLONEY: Sure.

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay.

2 MR. MOLONEY: Try to keep them simple.

3 BY MR. MOLONEY:

4 Q. Okay. Pat Moloney, Board of Pilot Commissioners. When
5 you talked about the ship taking you said a 30-degree port list,
6 was that when they'd already made the turn to port passing YBI on
7 the, the south side, and the he comes back to starboard? Was that
8 when he --

9 A. No.

10 Q. Where, where was that significant list?

11 A. It laid over when it was turning at what -- the
12 reference point I called C when they came hard to starboard.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. And it -- evidence of making a very sharp turn is
15 what --

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. -- is what I'm describing.

18 Q. Could that have been influenced by the bridge strike or
19 do you think --

20 A. No.

21 Q. -- that it was the rudder?

22 A. I think it was the rudder.

23 Q. The rudder going over and --

24 (Simultaneous comments.)

25 A. -- ships do when they make big course changes.

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: One person at a time.

2 BY MR. MOLONEY:

3 Q. Okay. As you were proceeding with the, the ship in
4 tethered mode, were you going bow first or stern first?

5 A. Bow first.

6 Q. Your, your main winch is on the bow?

7 A. That's right.

8 Q. When you were down to the one turn on the drum, you said
9 you had about 400 feet of line out.

10 A. Uh-huh.

11 Q. Okay. Thank you. What kind of line is it?

12 A. It's plasma.

13 Q. Do you know about the size?

14 A. Six-inch.

15 Q. And do you have approximately the braking strength?

16 A. I don't.

17 MR. MOLONEY: Okay, Milt, can you provide that, please?

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Don't have it off the top of my
19 head.

20 MR. MOLONEY: No, I -- later on.

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Oh, sure.

22 MR. MOLONEY: And could you also provide to me, and I'll
23 get it to you, Larry, the particulars of the tug? I went into my,
24 my database at the Commission and Revolution is so new relevant to
25 what I have in mind --

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Oh, I'll get that.

2 MR. MOLONEY: I don't have, I don't have all your new
3 stuff.

4 BY MR. MOLONEY:

5 Q. And one last thing, Captain. From where you were and
6 considering the load on deck of the Busan, could you see the
7 bridge wings?

8 A. I don't believe so. I don't know for sure.

9 MR. MOLONEY: That's all I have. Thank you.

10 MR. BOWLING: Thank you. Go back to the NTSB
11 representative myself, Larry Bowling.

12 BY MR. BOWLING:

13 Q. I just wanted to follow-up with you on the, the
14 communications. During the course of the transit when you started
15 seeing these behaviorisms or the maneuvering characteristics that
16 were happening on the, the Cosco Busan, did it cross your mind or
17 did you have any thought processes at any time to use the VHF to
18 contact the pilot and see what his intentions were?

19 A. No. And the reason why when we made the turn to port
20 and steadied up on this course, we were running something of a
21 parallel leg to the bridge --

22 Q. Right.

23 A. -- I thought a, a number of things could have been
24 happening that seemed reasonable. We are experiencing -- we, we
25 seemed to be pretty close to the bridge on that leg. We're

1 experiencing a flood current. I thought that if he had made a
2 change to go at Alpha Bravo, that he was on a good course because
3 he'd be experiencing a set by the time he got to Alpha Bravo,
4 possibly -- and could be in good position for that. Or if they
5 decided just to spin back around and come down to Anchorage 9.

6 Q. Okay. Were the -- was the level of communication
7 between you and the pilot during this particular evolution
8 adequate, inadequate, okay? I mean any -- what's your assessment
9 of the interaction of communications with the pilot's intentions
10 and your support role? Were they acceptable, unacceptable,
11 average?

12 A. Average.

13 Q. Okay.

14 MR. BOWLING: Gentlemen, any -- Coast Guard district
15 representative?

16 BY UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:

17 Q. So after you made that first turn to port near Alpha,
18 approximately what course did the vessel steady up on? This -- I
19 think it was the one you mentioned you were parallel to the --

20 (Simultaneous comments.)

21 Q. -- estimate.

22 A. -- when we -- what's the question again?

23 Q. At Point Alpha when -- made the hard turn to port and
24 then the vessel steadied up, approximately what course was the
25 vessel steadied up on?

1 A. I'd say 220, 230.

2 Q. Okay, my other question is, as a master of a tug
3 assisting a vessel, what is your responsibility as far as the
4 vessel's navigation? Not your vessel but as far as the ship's
5 navigation?

6 A. What's my responsibility?

7 Q. What's your understanding? What I'm really trying to
8 get this is -- more for the NTSB people who aren't mariners.

9 A. Uh-huh.

10 Q. But what is your responsibility for the ship's
11 navigation?

12 A. My responsibility is to do whatever the pilot asks me to
13 do.

14 Q. But it's not your responsibility to determine if he's in
15 a channel or left of track or right of track or any of that, is
16 that correct?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. Thanks.

19 MR. BOWLING: I think at this point, we'll conclude the
20 interview unless anybody has any closing questions. No.

21 Captain, I want to thank you and your legal
22 representative and the company representative for coming in. At
23 this point we'll go ahead and secure the communications.

24 (Whereupon, the interview in the above-entitled matter
25 was concluded.)

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: The Investigation of the Cosco
 Busan/Bridge Allision
 San Francisco, California
 Interview of Captain Douglas Alfers

DOCKET NUMBER: DCA-08-MM-004

PLACE: San Francisco, California

DATE: November 13, 2007

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been compared to
the recording accomplished at the hearing.

Katherine Motley
Transcriber

